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STRUCTURING TO PROJECT FORCE: THE UNIFIED AND SPECIFIED COMMANDS

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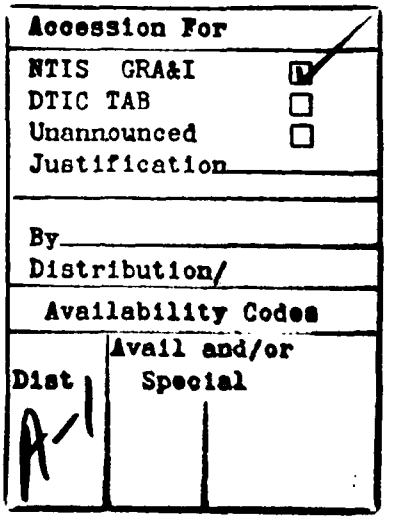

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I

INTRODUCTION

When military forces of the United States are used in combat against a foreign enemy, they operate under the auspices of one of the *unified* commands or one of the *specified*[1] commands. The number of such commands and their responsibilities are determined by the President and are outlined in his *Unified Command Plan.* The circumstances surrounding the establishment, abolition, and changing of

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[1] *Unified* and *specified* commands have broad, continuing operational missions. *Unified* commands, such as the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), are composed of forces of two or more of the military services. *Specified* commands, such as the Forces Command (FORSCOM) of the United States Army, are composed of forces of a single service. The *unified* and *specified commands* are the combatant commands, under which forces are actually employed in combat, as opposed to the major commands of the various services -- such as the Air Force's own Special Operations Command -- which only provide people, equipment, supplies, training, and administrative support. The combatant commands are led by commanders-in-chief -- CINCs -- whose chains of command go through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense and the President. The major commands of the services are led by commanders who answer through their service chiefs of staff to the service secretaries. In peacetime, for example, Air Force Special Operations Command is led by its commander, an Air Force general, who reports through the Chief of Staff of the Air Force to the Secretary of the Air Force. In actual operational use, however, this command becomes the Air Force *component* command of the *unified* USSOCOM, led by an Army general, who might be drawing forces from all the services. The CINC answers through the JCS Chairman to the Secretary of Defense and the President -- the ultimate Commander-in-Chief. Under operational circumstances, then, the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force only provide support and are not in the combat chain of command. The commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, as component commander, answers operationally to the USSOCOM CINC, and, for administrative and support matters, through Air Force channels.

these commands -- especially those commands which have had turbulent lives -- provide much insight into both the international and domestic political situations of the time. The most long-lived and venerable of these commands have been those which resulted from the immediate aftermath of World War II. Such organizations as the European Command, the Pacific Command, the Atlantic Command, and the Strategic Air Command were born as vestiges of World War II combat commands, and, even today, reflect the experiences of that War. They have been used to preserve the hard-won gains of the War, primarily through countering the Communist threat throughout the Cold War period.

During the same period, other commands have been established and abolished, divided and merged, specified and de-specified, strengthened and weakened, and renamed. In contrast to the well-established commands which, for years, saw few changes to their missions of preventing Communist -- especially Soviet -- hegemony, the commands with less enduring and less clearly defined missions have had unstable lives. This thesis provides a general examination of the lives of some of these commands. The emphasis is placed on those commands charged with the mission of projecting conventional force overseas, often to the Third World, perhaps against non-communist threats, and often with ambiguous missions against undefined enemies. This thesis focuses, in the first instance, on the *unified* Strike Command (STRICOM), which

existed from 1961 to 1972. Next, the *unified* Readiness Command (REDCOM), which replaced STRICOM and existed until 1987 is considered. The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), which existed from 1980 until 1983, and the *unified* Central Command (CENTCOM), which has existed since replacing the RDJTF in 1983 are discussed in the following two sections. Also of interest are the *unified* Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), the *unified* Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the development of the Army's Forces Command (FORSCOM) into a *specified* command, and the decline and abolition of the Readiness Command (REDCOM), all occurring in 1987. These most recent changes followed shortly after the release of the report of the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management (Packard Commission) and the enactment of the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, the culmination of years of slow progress in reforming the national defense establishment.

The tortuous histories of these commands reflect changing foreign policy emphases of Administrations, varying responses to perceived threats, changes in budget situations, and changes of emphases and values among the public. Their unstable histories reflect the relative lack of national consensus on their non-specific roles in the national security establishment. The vitality of such commands has at times been hampered by the bureaucratic inertia of the military establishment which, during the Cold War, generally preferred

to emphasize its familiar anti-Soviet mission under the established command structures. Strength has slowly been added to the force-projection apparatus through some aspects of the military reform movement and the resulting legislation of recent years.

One theme of this thesis will be that there has been a dichotomy in threats -- communist and non-communist -- with a corresponding dichotomy in justifications for military programs and organizations. The Communist threat has been the more heavily emphasized since it was a larger and perhaps a more enduring threat and since there was greater national and allied consensus in countering it through most of the era. The implications of changes in this threat are especially relevant today since the nation is now attempting to redefine its role in the post-Cold War world. The military is implementing dramatic decreases in strength even while being chided by those calling for more radical decreases. The military establishment's former arguments justifying strength to counter the Communist threat are now being used against it by critics who contend that the only major immediate threat is now gone. Yet, for years, the military has also been preparing for missions that have not inherently involved the Communist threat. Debate of such capability was less visible because both the missions and possible enemies were ambiguous and the domestic and international consensus seemed uncertain. To identify as a potential enemy a country which is not

presently an enemy would severely strain our relations with that country. And, without specific enemies, it is very difficult to gain the public attention and consensus.

The commands of interest in this project have followed a pattern in which one first finds a period of lack of involvement by American ground forces. This is followed by the establishment of mobile ground forces intended primarily to fight Communist aggression and insurgency in the Third World. Eventually one sees the expansion of these forces into other missions as well, with ever-increasing force-projection capability. These periods of build-up, usually following some cataclysmic event, are followed by introspective periods of renewed debate over the role of American forces, and by new pushes toward isolationism.

Throughout this thesis the themes and patterns of American force-projection will be examined from three perspectives. The broadest will be that of the public political atmosphere. Presidents, their administrations, the Congress, and the people are of key importance here. From this perspective, we see the most turbulence and swings in force-projection capability. The second perspective is that of the military establishment. Its members, often conservative by nature, tend to prefer incremental changes within the framework of established and familiar command structures rather than the sudden addition of major new missions and major new command structures. Finally, from the

perspective of the reformers, we see decades of strikingly consistent emphases on substantial changes in the organization of the military establishment. Many of these suggested changes have been made, since the middle of the 1980s. While the reform movement has encompassed much more than concern with force-projection capability, there has always been an emphasis on increased capability, including that of highly mobile forces.

The study of command structure is only one of many approaches to the studying of national security policy. One might, for example, analyze budgets, force levels, strategies, or diplomatic agreements. The approach taken here is, perhaps, novel, yet certainly important since commands embody the emphases of the force capability we project around the world. For a president to field a new command is to inject vitality into the national resolve to use force in a certain area. To abolish or weaken a command is an equally important reflection of shifts in his foreign and national security priorities. Through these structures, military policy is transmitted to the external world. When these structures are changed, a political message is also conveyed.

Beginning with the transition from the Eisenhower Administration to the Kennedy Administration, one surge in rapid force-projection commitment will be traced to its decrease during the Nixon Administration. A second such increase, beginning during the Carter Administration and

continuing with great acceleration under the Reagan Administration, will then be considered in greater depth. While the subject of force-projection is theoretically applicable world-wide, emphasis will be on a gradual increase in the capability to project force to the Middle East. There, the product that had resulted from decades of give and take on the issue of force-projection was recently validated, during Operation Desert Storm.

II

STRICOM

The transition from the Eisenhower Administration to the Kennedy Administration marked the beginning of the first force-projection increase to be considered. The Eisenhower years were characterized by balanced budgets and the New Look military policy which emphasized the strategy of massive retaliation. The Kennedy Administration entered with noble rhetoric of bearing burdens in the world and with the strategy of flexible response, backed up by expanding defense budgets. The establishment of the United States Strike Command (STRICOM) was evidence of the new Administration's initiatives in the early years of the 1960s. STRICOM lasted eleven years, until 1972, when there was public sentiment against military force-projection and the Nixon Administration was concerned with a peace-time budget with curtailed military expenses.

President Eisenhower saw Communism and, specifically, the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China as the major threats to the United States. He felt that attacks or lesser forms of intimidation by these powers could be deterred by his policy of massive retaliation with strategic nuclear weapons. Thus, the Strategic Air Command (SAC), equipped with intercontinental ballistic missiles, long-range manned bomber aircraft, and corresponding aerial refueling tanker aircraft

saw its glory years during the Eisenhower Administration. In addition, the advent of the Navy's nuclear ballistic missile submarines was an important contribution to the massive retaliation forces. With regard to regional commands, Eisenhower was most comfortable with the arrangements under which he had fought in World War II. Therefore, the European, Atlantic, and Pacific commands were important throughout his terms in office, even if not emphasized as much as was SAC.

The early years of the Eisenhower Administration were years in which the public was relieved that the United States was no longer involved in war, following the years of World War II and the Korean War. It was an era of surplus peacetime national budgets, with efficiency in military spending being stressed. The national economy was growing and the standard of living of the American people was improving. The President believed that frugal, balanced budgets, with only the minimum essential military spending, were in the best interest of the national security. Furthermore, from within his own party, he was faced with calls for disarmament and isolationism for the peaceful era during which he governed.[2]

President Eisenhower's policy of massive retaliation was well-adapted to these fiscal and political priorities. Reliance on strategic nuclear weapons gave greater range and

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[2]Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union. January 12, 1961." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1960-61* (Washington, 1961), p. 919.

firepower for each dollar spent than would reliance on conventional forces.

An example of Eisenhower's emphases is found in his message to the Congress, proposing his final budget, for the 1962 fiscal year. Numerous pages are devoted to discussion of strategic weapons, both those in use and those proposed for the future. He goes into detail in covering bomber aircraft and plans for increased alert levels for the bombers. He covers advances in intercontinental ballistic missile systems as well as anti-ballistic missile systems. Both air defense aircraft and surface-to-air missiles are covered. Also, he describes advances in early-warning and missile detection radar systems. He then covers in about one page most ground forces, including the Army and the Marine Corps, tactical air forces, and the airlift fleet. The latter he describes as "generally adequate" and only in need of orderly progress against obsolescence.[3]

The atmosphere resulting from Eisenhower's emphases aggravated inter-service rivalry. The Air Force, with the massive infusions of funding for the New Look policy, thrived during this era. The Navy also fared well in the area of strategic missile submarines. The Army, however, was not able to play a leading role under the massive retaliation policy.

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[3]Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Annual Budget Message to the Congress: Fiscal Year 1962. January 16, 1961," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1960-61* (Washington, 1961), pp. 949-956.

There were innovations in equipping the Army with tactical battlefield nuclear weapons and other technological advances, but there was still an absence of emphasis on the Army mission. Dissent was voiced within the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the late 1950s by General Maxwell Taylor, the Army's Chief of Staff, who wrote the following in his memoirs:

> [The Administration placed] main reliance on nuclear weapons to deter or defeat Communist aggression of all varieties and avoiding involvement in limited wars such as that in Korea. While conceding the need to deal with so-called brush fires, the Administration operated on the highly dubious assumption that if the Armed Forces were prepared to cope with nuclear war, they could take care of all lesser contingencies. If minor aggressors were not deterred by our nuclear forces, we would be prepared, in the words of Secretary Dulles, to use our nuclear weapons vigorously and at places of our own choosing.
>
> Even at a time when the United States had preponderant nuclear power in relation to the Soviet Union, such a doctrine offended the common sense of many thoughtful people and aroused their skepticism as to its practicality.[4]

Taylor's characterization of Eisenhower's policies is somewhat oversimplified. Eisenhower's carefully-planned national security policy consisted of five points: not to start wars, but to retain the capability to retaliate; reliance on deterrence in an era of weapons of mass destruction; broad reliance on America's moral, intellectual, economic, and military strength, realizing the struggle against Communism would last for decades; maintain modern

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[4]Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York, 1972), p. 164.

weapons instead of those of the last war; and maintaining strong alliances.[5] What Eisenhower sought to avoid was sudden, poorly-considered, unilateral involvements by the United States in foreign countries.

Taylor instead emphasized a flexible response policy which would only be adopted several years later, and by the next Administration. Other Army members as well continued to emphasize their mission, even though it was not then a politically popular mission. It was ironic and disconcerting for the Army that the retired Army general in the White House was presiding over a military program that so emphasized modern strategic aerospace weapons, at the expense of the traditional battlefield function of the land army. But Eisenhower had risen to five-star rank years earlier and had led forces to success in war. Comfortable and secure with his own position, I believe he was able to lead the entire military establishment without being captive to personal parochial interests. Eisenhower, thus, was no longer the traditional Army officer, but was instead an innovative strategist.

Eisenhower was also a military organizational reformer of his era. He expressed his conviction that warfare of the future would require unprecedented unity of the services, in his statement proposing the *Department of Defense*

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[5]Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change 1953-1956: The White House Years* (New York, 1963), pp. 446-447.

Reorganization Act of 1958:

> ...separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it in all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort. Peacetime preparatory and organizational activity must conform to this fact. Strategic and tactical planning must be completely unified, combat forces organized into unified commands...[6]

While the Department of Defense had existed and encompassed all the services since the previous decade, the separate military departments within DOD continued to have great power. Eisenhower presided over the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 that established the *unified* and *specified* commands, reporting through the Joint chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense and the President. Through his efforts here, Eisenhower laid some of the foundations that would be improved upon in future decades. He mainly thought in terms of empowerment of traditional theater commanders who, in future mobilizations, might lead large campaigns as he had done. But the President also provided foundations which eventually evolved into effective and clear authority for the future *unified* commanders of flexible, highly-mobile strike forces.

Still, concerns for national security, such as those previously voiced by General Taylor, increased as the 1960 election approached. Hawks from both major political parties

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[6]United States Senate, *Defense Organization: The Need for Change. Staff Report to the Committee on Armed Services* (Washington, 1985), p. 277.

raised further concerns about American military capability. For example, Republican Senator Prescott Bush of Connecticut said "this country's defenses must be 'impregnable' until 'an effective, controlled disarmament is negotiated'." From the Democratic side, Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut said "the proposed defense budget 'fails to make needed increases' for military programs."[7] Several months later, Democratic Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, stated that "the United States could win an all-out nuclear war but was unprepared to fight an effective limited conflict" and Democratic Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington stated that the few improvements Eisenhower had made in limited warfare capability were "late and little."[8]

Some of the public, having been comfortable with years of presidential leadership by an aging World War II general, began growing sufficiently uncomfortable that many wanted a younger World War II hero in the Oval Office, one with new ideas for a vigorous national security policy. In part, it was concern over security issues, such as the "missile gap" on a global level and Soviet-sponsored "wars of national liberation" on a regional level that contributed to Kennedy's

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[7]Jack Raymond, "Gates Acts to Nip Policy Disputes of Joint Chiefs," *The New York Times*, January 7, 1960, p. 1.

[8]"Gates Indicates 2D Defense Shift," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1960, p. 21.

close victory in the 1960 election.

Kennedy brought new, activist, idealistic ideas for foreign and national security policy to the White House. An interview he gave after nearly two years in office provides insight into his views on America's role in the world:

> When I just think of what we have done for 15 years, since '45, the countries we have sustained, the alliances of which we are the whole, the center, [*sic*] the willingness of the United States to accept burdens all around the world, I think it is a fantastic story. We have one million Americans today serving outside the United States. There is no other country in history that has carried this kind of a burden.[9]

Kennedy spoke generally of American contributions to the world. While he spoke of military strength -- particularly for use against Communism -- he was short on specifics of where and under what circumstances force might be used.

He was specific, however, in modifying military force structure. Three initiatives are of interest here. First, the Kennedy Administration instituted the new *unified* United States Strike Command in 1961. This force consisted of Army ground combat forces and Air Force tactical air units based in the continental United States. The Strike Command headquarters -- located at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida and commanded by an Army general -- was responsible for planning, exercising, and, if called upon, fighting in

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[9]John F. Kennedy, "Television and Radio Interview: "After Two Years - a Conversation with the President. December 17, 1962." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy 1962* (Washington, 1963), pp. 902-903.

conventional military operations. The force was designed to be rapidly deployable and to be able to fight on short notice and in areas where American forces were not normally based.

Such a force was quite a contrast to the policies of Eisenhower, who had earlier argued that a balanced, sure, steady approach against hostile ideologies was better than the temptation in crises "...to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution..."[10] Kennedy's approach was for conventional forces to be able to respond "with discrimination and speed, to any problem at any spot on the globe at any moment's notice."[11]

Kennedy is also remembered for his emphasis on special operations forces.[12] Such forces -- designed to be effective in counter-insurgency operations -- were in keeping with his broadening of the normal missions of armed forces. Special operations forces, as well as STRICOM, were presented as new

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] [10]Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People. January 17, 1961." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1960-61* (Washington, 1961), p. 1037.

[11]John F. Kennedy, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union. January 30, 1961," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy 1961* (Washington, 1962), p. 24.

[12]There was no command specifically for special operations forces at the time. For years, there has been a struggle between the military hierarchy, which favors conventional forces over special operations forces, and the reform advocates, who insist on more emphasis on special operations forces. As will be covered in a later section, it was not until 1987 that the *unified* United States Special Operations Command was established, at the Congress' insistence.

capabilities to halt Communist aggressions and insurgencies. While not explicitly stated by the President, such forces could certainly be used in other situations as well.

Neither STRICOM nor special forces could be effective against any threat unless there were adequate mobility for projecting the forces to the overseas areas of operation. Kennedy, therefore, accelerated modernization of airlift capability.[13] The continuation of the C-130 tactical airlifter program as well as the purchase of many new C-141 strategic airlifters and the planning for the fleet of larger C-5 strategic airlifters were all as consistent with the flexible response policy as were STRICOM and special forces.[14]

Had the President not been assassinated, he would, at his destination, have made a speech to include the following revealing summary of his achievements in force-projection capability:

> We have radically improved the readiness of our conventional forces--increased by 45 percent the

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[13]Kennedy did not change the command structure for airlift forces. The Military Air Transportation Service (later the Military Airlift Command) remained as part of the Air Force hierarchy. In 1977, the Military Airlift Command (MAC) became a *specified* command -- an all-Air Force organization, but answering operationally through the JCS to the Secretary of Defense rather than through the Air Force hierarchy. It was not until 1987 that the *unified* United States Transportation Command was formed -- with MAC as its Air Force component command -- to coordinate and provide operational command for airlift, sealift, and ground transportation functions of the services.

[14]Kennedy School of Government Case Program, *Shaping the National Military Command Structure: Command Responsibilities for the Persian Gulf* (Harvard, 1985), p. 6.

> number of combat ready Army divisions...increased by 100 percent our procurement of tactical aircraft, increased by 30 percent the number of tactical air squadrons, and increased the strength of the Marines. As last month's "Operation Big Lift"--which originated here in Texas--showed so clearly, this Nation is prepared as never before to move substantial numbers of men in surprisingly little time to advanced positions anywhere in the world. We have increased by 175 percent the procurement of airlift aircraft, and we have already achieved a 75 percent increase in our existing strategic airlift capability. Finally, moving beyond the traditional roles of our military forces, we have achieved an increase of nearly 600 percent in our special forces--those forces that are prepared to work with our allies and friends against the guerrillas, saboteurs, insurgents and assassins who threaten freedom in a less direct but equally dangerous manner.[15]

While all of these expansions were accompanied by increases in defense budgets, there was reason for the established military to be concerned. Under STRICOM -- as an additional *unified* command -- the involved forces were operationally controlled by a general who answered through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense and the President, instead of through the service chiefs of staff and service secretaries. For the tactical air forces, it meant operational command by an Army general instead of an Air Force general. For Army and Air Force, it meant that the *unified* commander's preferences would compete with the varying preferences of the services. There was fear, as STRICOM

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[15]John F. Kennedy, "Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the Trade Mart in Dallas. November 22, 1963." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy 1963* (Washington, 1964), p. 892.

matured, that it was becoming too powerful and that it might even represent a revival of proposals to merge the armed forces into a single service.

One case of such reactions resulted from a proposal that originated in the office of Cyrus Vance, then the General Counsel of the Department of Defense. He suggested forming a Combat Developments and Test Center within STRICOM. The center would have studied issues related to the organization, equipment, and development of operational concepts for employment of land and air forces across the complete spectrum of warfare. It would have served as a "single identifiable point of responsibility and authority for projects primarily concerned with counter-guerilla, counter-insurgency, and related operations." Objections were voiced by various members of the military establishment. Many charged that the initiative represented "empire-building" and that it would only duplicate efforts of the individual services. The Navy and Marine Corps were concerned that their missions would be usurped, with the flexibility of sea power being compromised and with the Marines losing their statutory responsibility for development of amphibious techniques. The Army was the least concerned, since STRICOM was commanded by an Army general and since the air and naval forces involved would be used largely in support of Army forces.[16]

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[16]Hanson W. Baldwin, "Pentagon Weighs New Test Center: Added Function for Strike Command Stirs Dispute," *The New York Times*,

Similarly, President Kennedy's emphasis on special forces constituted grounds for concern. Such forces might eventually draw resources away from the forces that were geared for traditional warfare. And even with abundant resources, there was the possibility that special forces would be favored for use in so many situations that the traditional missions of the military might be severely diminished.

Finally, Kennedy's emphasis on airlift was less appealing to the Air Force than had been Eisenhower's emphasis on strategic aerospace warfare capability. Airlift aircraft have a support mission, mainly providing mobility for the Army. For the Air Force, this meant that it was no longer America's pre-eminent combat force for deterring and retaliating in combat situations. Instead, the Air Force realized that there might be situations in which the it would be limited to providing airlift support for Army forces, which had gained a renewed importance.

In addition to providing new forces and missions for the military, the Kennedy Administration encouraged discussion of ways to improve the positions of the unified commanders and the conduct of joint operations. Even before the 1961 inauguration, a committee headed by Senator Symington had provided the President-elect with a series of proposed reforms in the structure of the military establishment. The committee's concern with problems resulting from inter-service

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April 20, 1962, p. 8.

rivalry is of interest here. The committee report stated that efforts to modify the National Security Act of 1947 had not altered "the essential character of the United States military organization, deployed on the basis of whether a military man travels on land, sea, or air." The committee criticized the predominance of individual services, instead of joint staffs, in operational planning. This resulted in duplication, overlapping, and excessive layers of control. The report continued, "No longer can this nation afford the luxury of letting each service strive to develop in itself the capability of fighting any war by itself."[17]

Most of the Symington Committee's recommendations were not implemented then, but most were also to be periodically revived in slightly modified form. Suggestions included reducing inter-service rivalry by doing away with the various service departments; by replacing the corporate function of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with a Military Advisory Council, composed of senior officers who would never return to their home services; by shifting much of the hardware acquisition power from the services to a strong official directly under the Secretary of Defense; and by radically changing the *unified* command structure. The new commands would include a strategic command, for nuclear functions; a tactical command, for conventional and limited warfare; a defense command, for

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[17]"Text of Symington Plan for Broad Revisions in Defense Set-Up," *The New York Times*, December 6, 1960, p. 30.

protecting the United States' territory from attack; and a command to include the Reserve forces, the National Guard, and Civil Defense. If any geographic regional commands were deemed necessary, they could be implemented on an *ad hoc* basis, drawing forces from the permanent commands, and reporting to the Chairman of the Joint Staff.[18] Symington's personal recommendation was that the tactical command be commanded by an Army general, that the defense command be commanded by an Air Force general, and that the strategic command be commanded by a Navy admiral.[19] This would have evenly distributed coveted CINC positions, but it would have been a remarkable shift in power for a naval officer to gain permanent operational command of the SAC forces which had dominated the defense policy of recent years.

There was also a suggestion to reduce the budget instabilities caused by unpredictable political forces. The committee recommended that certain long-lead time procurement projects be placed on multi-year budgets to prevent the

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] W.H. Lawrence, "Symington Panel Urges Revamping of the Pentagon," *The New York Times,* December 6, 1960, p. 30. The idea of a *unified* strategic command was suggested by many reformers, but it was adopted only after the Cold War was over, with the decision to establish the United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in 1992. STRATCOM's purpose is to provide operational control of the Air Force's strategic bombers and ICBMs and the Navy's SLBMs. For many years, the only progress toward a unified organization was the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff, which was composed of Air Force and Navy personnel and was located at SAC's headquarters at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Congress from changing on-going programs each year. While this proposal would likely save money and allow increased stability in defense planning, the Congress would have been unwilling to relinquish its short-term purse-string power. [20]

The prospects for significant reform during the Kennedy Administration were side-tracked as the focus shifted to the war in Vietnam. Instead of using rapid deployment of strike forces, the United State's involvement in the Vietnam War slowly grew from an advisory role to full-scale combat with ground forces. While special forces and the expanding airlift forces were widely used, the STRICOM structure was not used. Instead, the overall command of forces in Vietnam generally fell under PACOM, an established *unified* command. A sub-*unified* command under PACOM, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) -- at times almost exclusively an Army command -- was established for the war. In addition, naval units from the Pacific Fleet, answering directly to PACOM, and Air Force units from SAC, itself a specified command, were involved, but outside the jurisdiction of MACV.[21]

Such organizational problems in part prompted President Nixon to convene the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel in 1969. Among the many recommendations contained in its 1970 report, the committee revived the Symington Committee's proposal of a

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[20] *Ibid.*

[21] United States Senate, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

strategic command and a tactical command, this time to be teamed with a logistics command which would coordinate inter-service supply, maintenance, and *transportation* needs. The tactical command would have been formed by merging STRICOM with the unified United States Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) and the unified United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).[22]

The panel also provided insight into the weakness of the *unified* CINCs: The CINCs had operational control of their forces in combat, but the individual military departments retained administrative control of the forces. There was, therefore, a lack of unity of command. Conversely, the component commanders (for example, the Air Force officer in command of the Air Force component of STRICOM) had unity of command. They commanded combat operations, answering to the CINC, and they were in command, both in wartime and in peacetime, of the administrative details, answering through their service chains of command.[23]

Most of the panel's suggestions were not acted upon. To reduce the number of unified commands would disturb normal patterns of operation and would eliminate positions. Indeed, the number of unified and specified commands has remained

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[22] *Report to the President and the Secretary of Defense on the Department of Defense by the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel 1 July 1970* (Washington, 1970), pp. 55-57.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

remarkably constant.[24] To restrict the power of service component commanders while expanding the power of the CINCs would have met with resistance from the military departments. And with a war in progress, it was easy to place a priority on anything but reform efforts.

By 1972, American ground involvement in the war was winding down and the President was campaigning for reelection. Many Americans had tired of the war and were longing for another post-war period of recovery and growth, reminiscent of the 1950s. The consensus support of force-projection, even against Communism, was weakened. Indeed, many critics were then charging that the involvement in Vietnam was futile, that it had little to do with Communism, and that even if it did involve Communism, the United States should not have felt threatened by it.

Senator George McGovern, the Democratic nominee challenging Nixon in the election, campaigned on a platform which called for an end to involvement in the war and for radical reductions of Nixon's military budget. A committee advising McGovern suggested that the United States was over-extending itself abroad and impoverishing itself at home. The committee called for an end to all American counter-insurgency

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[24]When STRICOM was abolished, REDCOM was established. REDCOM, in turn, overlapped with the new CENTCOM for only four years, until REDCOM was abolished. When TRANSCOM was established, MAC lost its specified status, and when STRATCOM is established, SAC will be abolished. See chart, United States Senate, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

operations. Clark Clifford, the committee's vice-chairman, stated that Nixon's policies were outdated: that the United States could not unilaterally be the world's policeman and that the United States military should not play a decisive role in influencing political developments of other countries.[25] Ironically, Clifford had also served on the Symington Committee, which, in 1960, had advised President-elect Kennedy on military issues, following themes that were drastically different from his 1972 themes.

Nixon -- like Eisenhower -- while stressing the importance of solid military strength, also was aware that the public wanted peace and that the fiscal and political situations favored decreases in military spending. Under his new policies, he stated that the need to use American forces "in situations not involving other nuclear powers should lessen over time with the success of our cooperative efforts under the Nixon Doctrine to strengthen allied...forces."[26] Such policies allowed him to announce that his budget "...for the first time, allocates more money to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare than to the Department of

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[25]"McGovern Unit Says Defense Can be Cut," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1972, p. 30.

[26]Richard Nixon, "Third Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy. February 9, 1972." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon 1972* (Washington, 1974), p. 312.

Defense."[27]

One of the casualties of such priorities was STRICOM. For a time, STRICOM had also had a regional responsibility for the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, with CINCSTRIKE also designated as CINCMEAFSA. This regional designation had later been removed. In 1972, STRICOM's responsibilities for combat command were removed. These roles were assumed by the various regional unified commands. STRICOM became the unified United States Readiness Command (REDCOM), which was mainly responsible for deploying forces from the continental United States to foreign theaters where the regional commanders would take charge.[28] The Joint Deployment Agency -- a Joint Chiefs of Staff agency which was responsible for coordinating the transportation of forces -- was located at MacDill Air Force Base and was directed by CINCRED.

These changes signaled the withering of President Kennedy's efforts to enhance rapid force-projection capability. When he ascended to the Presidency, he spoke generally of American forces standing ready to defend freedom and to fight Communism. But he was short on specifics. When the nation was asked to bear the specific burden of Vietnam, the people eventually became weary and disillusioned. The

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[27]Richard Nixon, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union. January 20, 1972." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon 1972* (Washington, 1974), p. 45.

[28]Kennedy School of Government Case Program, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

euphoric ideals of 1960 had been shattered. The lesson learned is that the possible use of American forces in limited warfare in the Third World should be articulated, at least in general terms. This should be done only to the extent possible without creating the self-fulfilling prophecy of naming potential enemies. The eve of war is not the time to decide if the nation should fight against a hostile ideology, against the invader of a friend, or to protect a material resource. If there is public discussion of what levels of force might be used, in which regions, for how long, for what reasons, and against what types of foes, then the nation might be better capable of deciding if it is willing to fight and for what objectives.

Following the involvement in Vietnam, the nation went through an introspective period of emphasizing mainly domestic matters. Military budgets were cut, missions were curtailed, and, since the military was shrinking, the demand for reform was less urgent than before. During these years -- the middle and late 1970s -- the American military began to be characterized as a hollow force. But, it was surprisingly soon that the concepts of a rapidly deployable force and corresponding changes in *unified* command structure were revived.

III

RDJTF

President Carter continued the policy of détente, which was originally adopted by President Nixon and continued under President Ford. President Carter's version placed greater emphasis on the moral and human rights dimensions of foreign policy. These emphases had to be changed toward the end of the Carter Administration as various foreign problems developed. Among these were the power-vacuum caused by the fall of the Shah of Iran, problems in Cuba, the Horn of Africa, Yemen, and, most importantly, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union.

From early in the Carter Presidency, there had been an initiative to develop a unilateral, rapid deployment military force, a revival of the STRICOM concept. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski -- the leading White House advocate of such a force -- felt that it would provide an element of power and flexibility, which would balance the Administration's stated emphasis on principle. Lack of priority and of political and bureaucratic consensus had stalled the initiative until 1979. Then, however, the idea developed quickly, as a result of the foreign challenges -- particularly the growing Soviet threat. The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) was formed, but did not reach maturity as a *unified* command until the next Administration.

Within the military, there was resistance to RDJTF and to giving it full-fledged command status. But, once its formation was certain, there were struggles over who would be in control of the new force. Reform proposals continued during these years, but without great vigor. The Carter initiatives, however, set the stage for major reform and reorganization of the *unified* and *specified* commands during the Reagan years.

Reasons that contributed to the public's election of Carter in 1976 included the Watergate problem, the desire for a change from the interventionist policies associated with the recent Vietnam experience, and the desire for a critical, inward focus for a time, with an emphasis on domestic concerns. Early Carter rhetoric had stressed arms control, peaceful resolution of conflicts, human rights, and an emphasis on issues of North-South equity and development instead of East-West confrontation. Carter had accused President Ford and his predecessors of insensitivity to human rights and moral concerns in foreign policy. In debates with President Ford, for example, he questioned the United States' policy of arms sales, especially to the Middle East. He also criticized the close American ties with the Shah's regime. He was concerned about human rights issues within Iran and feared the United States was becoming the arms merchant of the

world.[29]

The following excerpts from Carter's famous commencement address at the University of Notre Dame, on May 22, 1977 give a sampling of the themes of early Carter Administration foreign policy:

> Being confident of our own future, we are now free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear...
>
> For too many years, we've been willing to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs. We've fought fire with fire, never thinking that fire is better quenched with water. This approach failed, with Vietnam the best example of its intellectual and moral poverty. But through failure, we have now found our way back to our own principles and values...[30]

Consistent with the above, Carter achieved early foreign policy successes such as negotiation of the Panama Canal treaties, the Camp David accords, and the SALT II treaty.[31]

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[29]"Presidential Campaign Debate of October 6, 1976," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Gerald R. Ford 1976-77* (Washington, 1979), Book III, pp. 2418-2420.

[30]Carter then outlined the five cardinal principles of his foreign policy: human rights, bonds among democracies working together to solve the world's problems, halting the strategic arms race, peace in the Middle East, and halting arms proliferation in general, both conventional and nuclear. Jimmy Carter, "University of Notre Dame: Address at Commencement Exercises at the University. May 22, 1977." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1977, Book I* (Washington, 1977), pp. 956-960.

[31]I do not mean to suggest that these were complete successes. Gaining Senate ratification of the Panama Canal treaties was extremely difficult, and the President withdrew the SALT II treaty from Senate consideration following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Camp David accords were a partial success. While Egypt and Israel eventually reached a peace settlement and resolved the Sinai issue, the Palestinian issue remains unresolved. The

But the possibility of serious difficulties in the Middle East had been foreshadowed as early as 1973 when, in the wake of the oil embargo, Henry Kissinger had suggested that eventually it might be necessary for the United States to use military force to protect its access to Gulf oil supplies. Near the beginning of the Carter Administration in 1977, Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington had sent a memorandum to Brzezinski suggesting that the Gulf region was the most likely place of the next confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.[32] A result was Presidential Directive (PD) 18, issued in August of 1977. It called for a unilateral, quick reaction military force, composed mainly of light infantry, accompanied by improved airlift and sealift.[33] Instead of having a regional focus, this capability was originally intended to have a global function. Also in 1977, the Military Airlift Command (MAC) gained status as a *specified* "combatant" command, with its CINC reporting operationally through the JCS to the Secretary of Defense.[34]

Another early impetus for rethinking U.S. strategy for the Middle East came with the invasion of North Yemen by

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early successes did, however, give the Administration a confidence boost in its diplomatic skills.

[32]Cecil V. Crabb Jr., *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy: Their Meaning, Role, and Future* (Baton Rouge, 1982), p. 336.

[33]Kennedy School of Government Case Program, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[34]United States Senate, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

Marxist South Yemen, on February 22, 1979. The Saudis feared expanding Marxist influence and made an urgent appeal for assistance from the United States. The situation prompted numerous crisis meetings among Administration staff in February and March of 1979. The immediate result was increased military aid to Saudi Arabia and North Yemen. The more lasting result was the launching of a full-scale reappraisal of United States military strategy for Southwest Asia, with initial planning beginning for the quick reaction force.[35] Therefore, contrary to popular belief, the beginning of the new military organization had already been made, and did not simply follow the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

With the Shah's overthrow early in 1979, the situation became most unstable. As there was no other ally to assume Iran's previous role of providing stability to the region, the Administration intensified consideration of an American military presence.

At first, the Administration encountered slow reaction from certain agencies to its directives to prepare for a quick reaction force. Some of the senior leaders of the State Department were opposed to a greater military emphasis, feeling diplomacy should be relied upon and that diplomacy would be undermined by a new military strategy. Furthermore,

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[35]Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran* (New York, 1985), pp. 350-351.

much effort had been invested in working with the Soviet Union in the areas of arms control and the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean. It was feared that the new military focus would likely negate many months, even years, of progress.

The primary proponents of the new force came from within the White House. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski was first to champion the new strategy. A small group of Pentagon officials, including civilians such as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Robert Murray and, later, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Robert Komer, also were early supporters. These advocates of a new rapid deployment force constantly prodded those reluctant to change.[36] Maxwell Orme Johnson summarized well the divisions within the Administration:

> ...Komer and [Under Secretary State for Political Affairs David] Newsom, the principal policy directors at the Pentagon and the State Department, were constantly at odds...Newsom and [Secretary of State Cyrus] Vance argued for a flexible, patient, and conciliatory approach, while the Brzezinski-Brown-Komer triumvirate gradually took the lead in policy planning with an approach that was increasingly centered around the military force option. Hence, throughout 1979 foreign policy planning for Southwest Asia became the purview of the Pentagon rather than the State Department.[37]

The lengthy hostage crisis in Iran was reason for daily

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[36]Kennedy School of Government Case Program, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9.

[37]Maxwell Orme Johnson, *The Military as an Instrument of U.S. Policy in Southwest Asia: The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, 1979-1982* (Boulder, 1983), p. 112.

meetings of top National Security Council, State Department, and Defense Department officials. These sessions were an opportunity for Brzezinski, his military assistant, Army officer William Odom, and other like-minded officials to gradually present their new framework for Middle Eastern security: one with a lasting U.S. military commitment.

Such progress continued at the December 4, 1979 meeting of the National Security Council, where the decision was taken to deploy two aircraft carriers to the waters surrounding the Middle East and AWACS aircraft to Egypt, for possible retaliation against Iran. Brzezinski presented preliminary results of a facilities review he had had ongoing since April of 1979. There was discussion of possible use of military bases provided by Oman, Egypt, Somalia, and Kenya. The President directed further study of these possibilities, with the Omani island of Masirah -- largely a British facility at the time -- eventually used for some U.S. operations. Brzezinski summed up the consensus of this meeting by suggesting that with Iran no longer a source of regional stability, U.S. presence would continue for the indefinite future, after the ending of the hostage crisis.[38] Ten days later, on December 14, 1979, Defense Secretary Brown officially announced that the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force would become operational on March 1, 1980.

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[38]Sick, *op. cit.*, p.241.

Within two weeks, in late December of 1979, this concern for stability in the Gulf region was dramatically highlighted when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The invasion shocked the Gulf oil kingdoms, causing them to gain a painful realization of their vulnerability and threatening the success of U.S. efforts to help forge a regional security framework.[39]

In the United States, there was fear that the occupation of Afghanistan meant that another "domino" had fallen. Many felt that this was just a foothold and that the Soviets would eventually continue, possibly to capture a warm water port or even to seize and control the entire Persian Gulf area. The result of this Soviet expansionism, not by guerilla, proxy, or subversion, but by divisions of the Soviets' regular forces, marked the final end of détente. The invasion was considered a hostile move by an aggressor into a region that was critical to the United States and other western nations.

In response to the invasion, Carter's rhetoric and policies shifted sharply and remained changed, for the most part, for the remainder of his time in office.

On January 23, 1980, he announced the Carter Doctrine:

> An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

any means necessary, including military force.[40]

Having then designated the Gulf region a vital interest, he continued and accelerated the previously half-hearted efforts to develop a new United States military force-projection capability. He withdrew the SALT II treaty from Senate consideration, but hoped that future circumstances would allow it to be re-submitted. Also, he provided support to the rebels resisting the Soviet-imposed government in Afghanistan. An Administration official was then quoted as saying the region had attained the "status of Western Europe, Japan and South Korea, areas where Washington is prepared to risk a conflict to contain Soviet influence."[41] An observer noted that the Nixon policy of avoiding entanglement in regional conflicts had been abandoned and that "the language of detente was largely replaced by the language of containment," evoking memories of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.[42]

The dramatic nature of these shifts in policy is clear when they are compared to the President's reaction, less than four months earlier, to the reporting of the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba. The President then stated that

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[40]"The State of the Union," Jan. 23, 1980, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1980-81* (Washington, 1982), p. 197.

[41]Richard Burt, "How U.S. Strategy Toward Persian Gulf Region Evolved," *The New York Times*, January 25, 1980.

[42]Hedrick Smith, "The Carter Doctrine," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1980, p. A1.

"there was no reason for a return to the Cold War...[he] concluded that the real danger was the threat of nuclear destruction and urged ratification of SALT II."[43]

This all changed after the invasion of Afghanistan. Carter expressed the scope of his disillusionment in an interview with Frank Reynolds of ABC News, in his new outlook on U.S.-Soviet relations:

> this action has made a more dramatic change in my own opinion of what the Soviets' ultimate goals are than anything they've done in the previous time I've been in office.[44]

Among the more "dovish" members of the Administration were Vance and his successor, Edmund Muskie. In the early years of the Administration, Vance had dominated important aspects of the United States' foreign policy, but now had little influence on the President. The following excerpt from his memoirs expresses Vance's concern that the Administration was abandoning its principles in its post-Afghanistan policy:

> Afghanistan was unquestionably a severe setback of the policy I advocated. The tenuous balance between visceral anti-Sovietism and an attempt to regulate dangerous competition could no longer be maintained. The scales tipped toward those favoring confrontation, although in my opinion, the confrontation was more rhetorical than real.[45]

Vance had held out, with Carter, for three years against

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[43]Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981* (New York, 1983), p. 351.

[44]Sick, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

[45]Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York, 1983), p. 394.

the more "hawkish" advisers. They hoped that the USSR would respond to the opportunity for peaceful east-west competition. Vance -- who in 1962 had advocated major strengthening of STRICOM -- had become isolated in 1980, left behind by Carter's move toward a more "hawkish" approach. Frustrated by his decreasing influence during the exceptional year of 1980, he resigned from office following the attempt to rescue the American hostages from Iran.[46]

Brzezinski had always been more concerned about the Soviets than Vance had been, and with the difficulties of 1979 and 1980, he was able to gain ever-increasing influence with the President. He had been an early advocate of a stronger military policy, even before the fall of the Shah, and had quietly been working toward that goal.

As the world situation deteriorated, Brzezinski's influence rose. He saw power as a means for reaching moral ends and wrote:

> ...when a choice between the two had to be made, between projecting U.S. power or enhancing human rights (as, for example, in Iran), I felt that power had to come first. Without credible American power, we would simply not be able either to protect our interests or to advance more humane goals.[47]

Brzezinski writes that Carter understood, but was

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[46]Vance was opposed to the rescue attempt. The final decision authorizing the mission was made while Vance was out of the capital. Sick, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-292.

[47]Brzezinski, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

frustrated by, the need for Brzezinski to become a more outspoken advocate of policy:

> ...I think he knew my role changed in part because events bore out my grimmer assessments of the Soviet role and because increasingly the Administration needed an articulate voice to explain what it was trying to do.[48]

When the President shifted toward the Brzezinski orientation and announced the Carter Doctrine, he did not have additional military force structure or solid contingency plans to support the commitment. The preliminary arrangements had begun, but there was little in place to respond to an immediate crisis, as Jeffrey Record noted:

> A new headquarters and planned increases in the strategic mobility of U.S. ground and tactical air forces proved no substitute for the real additional military muscle needed to defend U.S. interests in Southwest Asia without endangering the ability of the United States to deliver on its longstanding commitments in Europe and the Far East.[49]

Anthony Cordesman agreed, in stronger terms, with Record that there was no way American forces could have stopped a major Soviet invasion of the Middle East in 1980. Such capability would only be available in the late 1980s and, "Everything else was posturing, smoke, and incompetence."[50]

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[48] *Ibid*, p. 29.

[49] Jeffrey Record, *Revising U.S. Military Strategy: Tailoring Means to Ends* (Washington, 1984), p. 38.

[50] Anthony H. Cordesman, "U.S. Strategic Interests and Rapid Deployment Forces," *International Security in Southwest Asia*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York, 1984), p. 163.

Another critic was Newsom, who feared that the President was responding too quickly with a major policy that would be difficult and dangerous to implement. After leaving office, Newsom wrote that the Carter Doctrine and its attendant commitments were hastily devised and widely accepted with dangerously little public debate. He even suggested that the Doctrine initially "grew out of last minute pressures for a presidential speech."[51]

Newsom contended that a Soviet push into the oil regions was unlikely, that the Soviets were far more concerned with China and Eastern Europe -- especially Poland -- than with the Middle East, and that the Arab states of the Gulf region felt less threatened by the Soviets than did the United States. The Gulf states, he suggested, acknowledged the Soviet threat in part to gain political leverage with the United States. While the American presence was welcome as long as it was kept at a distance, the Arabs could ill afford to host forces that would serve as a reminder of the area's colonial past and cause various social and cultural problems and possibly even incite rebellion or war.[52]

Newsom also was concerned about the great expense of the commitment and that resulting conflicts might spread and escalate to the nuclear level. His alternative proposal was

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[51]David D. Newsom, "America Engulfed," *Foreign Policy*, 43:17, Summer 1981.

[52]*Ibid.*, pp. 18-19, 21.

to provide air and naval forces only, to provide arms and advisers, and to support a regional defense arrangement. Also, he suggested emphasizing diplomacy with the Soviets while de-emphasizing the military.[53]

Still, the improvement of capabilities in the region progressed. Given the change in priorities that this was for the Administration, it would take time before adequate progress could be made to satisfy those who feared Carter had made an excessive commitment.

In the mean time, it became necessary to clarify American commitments when the Iran-Iraq War began. On October 7, 1980, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher made a speech which contained several implied commitments. He stated that the nation was neutral and that the Soviets should exercise restraint. He suggested that the United States would use military force to prevent the belligerents from blocking maritime routes in the Gulf. Also, he suggested that the United States would protect Saudi Arabia, if threatened.[54]

To those who argued that the United States could not successfully counter additional Soviet movement into the Middle East, Carter responded that the Carter Doctrine was carefully considered and worded. It would be "backed by

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[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

[54] Warren Christopher, "Conflict in Iran and Iraq, October 7, 1980," U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Current Policy No. 234 (Washington, 1980).

concerted action, not necessarily confined to any small invaded area or to tactics or terrain of the Soviet's choosing."[55] In written thoughts prepared for the incoming Reagan Administration, Carter acknowledged that there was insufficient capability to meet a major Soviet invasion and that it was essential to make it clear that such an invasion "would precipitate a worldwide confrontation between us and the Soviet Union, which would not be limited to the Persian Gulf area." Also, "no one could guarantee....[the conflict]...would remain restricted to the use of conventional forces."[56]

I believe Carter hoped that the new policies would be only temporary -- much as Secretary McNamara had hoped that the build-up resulting from the Berlin Crisis was to be very short-lived -- and that he could in a second term revert to his original emphases. But after his defeat in the 1980 election, Carter, sensed that military spending would spiral out of control. The outgoing President, hedging his policy position, left these thoughts for the incoming Reagan Administration:

> I have pointed out to the other members of the [National Security] Council that the demands for defense expenditures comprise a bottomless pit which we can never fill. One of the most serious problems we have, as I have said many times to this

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[55]Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York, 1982), p. 483.

[56]*Ibid.*, p. 587.

> group, is the inclination on the part of our military leaders - the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the civilian leaders as well - to seek more money, by savaging ourselves, constantly denigrating America's formidable military capability. This hurts our own country and our allies' confidence in us, and might lead the Soviet leaders to make a suicidal misjudgment based on the chorus of lamentations from the Pentagon and defense contractors that we are weak and impotent.[57]

While the political situation was muddled, with both "hawkish" and "dovish" opinions expressed, the Defense Department was generally reluctant to implement a new force structure. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the individual services, which had preferred their "big-ticket" weapons designed for strategic nuclear war and for large-scale conventional ground war in Europe against Warsaw Pact forces. They feared a Middle Eastern emphasis might require new weapons and doctrine based on low-intensity conflict and that would drain their budgets and possibly deplete other forces. The Navy was concerned about the emphasis on land forces instead of naval forces for many scenarios in the area. Also, Navy leadership was unwilling to risk sending carriers into the Persian Gulf, draining their resources and moving away from the blue-water mission they preferred. The Army feared the emphasis would be on light, mobile forces instead of their preferred heavier, European scenario forces. The Marines foresaw such a emphasis on their involvement that the entire Corps would be required for Southwest Asia, eliminating them

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[57] *Ibid.*, p. 588.

completely from the European mission, which was a major emphasis of the Administration. And the Air Force felt its main role in the region would be airlift, rather than the tactical forces emphasized by airpower proponents.[58] Also, there was concern over the real possibility of fighting an unpopular and futile unconventional war in Southwest Asia, similar to the one experienced in Southeast Asia.

The services, though not eager to assume the new mission, nevertheless each wanted control of it, if implemented. There developed a split along Army-Air Force and Navy-Marine lines. The Army-Air Force position was that combat in the region would call for heavy, land-based, deep-penetrating forces which could, for example, hold the bulk of Iran and Gulf oil fields against Soviet advances. The Navy-Marine camp argued that a naval and amphibious strategy was essential due to the lack of bases in the immediate vicinity for ground forces. Also, they emphasized the maritime nature of the Indian Ocean and Gulf region and the importance of sea lanes for oil transport.

The inter-service rivalry carried over to the contention about which unified or specified command would control the region. In the past, the Middle East had straddled the boundary between the European Command (EUCOM) -- always commanded by an Army general -- and the Pacific Command

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[58]Kennedy School of Government Case Program, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

(PACOM) -- always commanded by a Navy admiral. In fact, the key Straits of Hormuz was bisected by the boundary, making it unclear who was responsible for this narrow passage, considered by many to be one of the most likely areas of military action in the region. Both commands, and the respective dominant service, wanted to control RDJTF. Also in the competition was the Readiness Command (REDCOM), which had operational control over most Army and Air Force units in the continental United States, for the purpose of funneling them abroad to the geographic commands under which they would fight in a contingency. REDCOM -- commanded by an Army general -- suggested that since most RDJTF personnel would be drawn from REDCOM resources, then REDCOM should control the Rapid Deployment Force. The Navy and the Marine Corps opposed this idea, not wanting their forces to be subordinate to CINCRED, an Army general. The result was a compromise, with a Marine general as the first RDJTF commander and with RDJTF partially under REDCOM. This policy remained in effect for the duration of the Carter Administration, with both REDCOM and RDJTF being located at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.[59]

There were many turf battles at MacDill, between the two headquarters. This was accentuated by the fact that there was a Pentagon office in the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization through which RDJTF could communicate directly to the JCS

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 20-22, 26-27.

without going through REDCOM channels. General Volney Warner, the CINCRED, complained to his superiors that it was senseless to have two headquarters on the same base, with the many of the same forces assigned to both organizations. He suggested that he be given greater control of RDJTF and that the Washington RDJTF office be closed. Marine Lieutenant General P.X. Kelley, the RDJTF commander, was equally adamant that he would not give up authority to the four-star Army CINCRED. These disputes were to remain unresolved for the remainder of the Carter Presidency.[60]

Suggestions for promoting harmony in the military, by reforming command structure, continued during the Carter years, but with few results. In 1978, Richard C. Steadman was commissioned to complete a study of the National Military Command Structure, and to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. Steadman revived previous ideas such as a strengthening of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the establishment of a panel of national military advisers. For the unified commanders, he recommended that their voices be strengthened, particularly in matters related to needs of the forces under their operational command.[61]

In terms of actual *unified* command structure, he largely

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[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 31-35.

[61] Richard C. Steadman, *Report to the Secretary of Defense on the National Military Command Structure* (Washington, 1978), pp. 70-77, 38-39.

was content with the *status quo*. While the RDJTF concept was under discussion by 1978, there was little emphasis on it at the time, and Steadman did not address that precise subject. He did, however, leap ahead and discuss the idea of a formal unified command, specifically for the Middle East. Steadman concluded that such a command was not necessary, and that regional responsibilities should remain under EUCOM. While EUCOM was primarily concerned with NATO matters, he believed that the Middle East was a traditional concern of European powers and that the security of European economies depended on oil from the Middle East. The region was, thus, a NATO and a EUCOM concern according to Steadman. He conceded that a sub-unified command for the Middle East might be desirable, to ensure that the emphasis on the Middle East was not completely overshadowed by the emphasis on Europe, but that the sub-unified command should remain under EUCOM.[62]

Steadman supported REDCOM and proposed that it be strengthened. He wanted to see more mobilization and deployment planning centered here. Further, he suggested that Naval and Marine forces become more involved in REDCOM exercises. Finally, he recommended that REDCOM be given a broad role in developing doctrine for all branches of the military.[63]

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[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-21.

Secretary of Defense Brown also realized needs for reform, but did not articulate them extensively until after leaving office. In 1983, he wrote of the problems resulting from inter-service rivalry. He also lamented the fact that the services kept their most talented officers on individual service staffs, while assigning other officers to joint positions. This favoring of non-joint duty invariably promoted parochial interests and inter-service rivalry, and it harmed to military's ability to plan effective joint operations.[64]

During these years, then, reforms were suggested, but there was never enough momentum to make major changes. The suggestions were, however, part of the gradual growth of the reform movement which escalated during the next Administration to the achievement of both major reform and major changes to command structure. For the time being though, the Carter Administration had to deal with major challenges and the dramatic shift from the early Carter emphases to the 1980 realities of force-projection capability.

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[64]Harold Brown, *Thinking About National Security: Defense and Foreign Policy in a Dangerous World* (Boulder, 1983), pp. 207-214.

IV

CENTCOM, TRANSCOM, USSOCOM, REDCOM, FORSCOM AND REFORM

While President Carter moved toward a hard-line foreign policy in 1980, he was challenged from a more clear-cut hard-line position by Ronald Reagan. By 1980, the public preferred Reagan's tougher approach to foreign affairs, and he was elected with a strong mandate. Military budgets steadily increased through most of the Reagan years. Carter's initiatives of 1980 were sustained and expanded by Reagan. RDJTF was no longer considered an *ad hoc* solution to a temporary problem of Soviet aggression, but, instead, it grew into the *unified* United States Central Command (CENTCOM), on an organizational par with other regional organizations such as EUCOM, SOUTHCOM, LANTCOM, and PACOM.

This additional status for CENTCOM exacerbated rivalry within the military. While increased military capability was among the Administration's highest priorities, many members of the reform movement felt that numerous problems within the Pentagon were going unaddressed. They succeeded during Reagan's second term in implementing a variety of reforms. Among these were changes in the *Unified Command Plan* and increased power for the combatant CINCs. A result of the various forces at work during these years was improved conventional rapid force-projection capability.

In the October 28, 1980 presidential campaign debate in Cleveland, Ohio, President Carter's rhetoric was vastly different from that of 1976. He stated that he had reversed a period of decline in American military capability:

> The fact is that this Nation, in the 8 years before I became President, had its own military strength decreased. Seven out of 8 years, the budget commitments for defense went down, 37 percent in all. Since I've been in office, we've had a steady, carefully planned, methodical but very effective increase in our commitment for defense.

In his response, Reagan observed that Carter was referring to the nation's period of decreasing involvement in and withdrawal from Vietnam, when decreases in military spending would be expected. Then, he stated:

> Now, Gerald Ford left a 5-year projected plan for a military buildup to restore our defenses, and President Carter's administration reduced that by 38 percent, cut 60 ships out of the Navy building program that had been proposed, and stopped the B-1, delayed the cruise missile, stopped the production line for the Minuteman missiles, delayed the Tridents [*sic*] submarine, and now is planning a *mobile military force that can be delivered to various spots in the world* - which does make me question his assaults on whether I am the one that is quick to look for use of force.[65]

Here, Reagan was expressing concern about two aspects of Carter policy. First, Carter had cut various military hardware acquisition programs as well as funding to sustain the existing forces. Also, Reagan felt that RDJTF, in 1980,

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[65]"Remarks at the 1980 Presidential Campaign Debate. October 28, 1980." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter 1980-81* (Washington, 1982), Book III, pp. 2478-2480. Italics mine.

was dangerously unable to enforce the commitments of the Carter Doctrine. He suggests here that making a commitment as bold as was the Carter Doctrine without a corresponding depth of military capability was to take an irresponsible risk that a conflict might escalate tragically. Reagan assured campaign audiences that he would bring about peace through a sound national security policy based, first, on maintaining adequate military strength, to be followed by negotiation.

The public had had four years to draw away from the introspective atmosphere of Carter's 1976 election. They were now ready to accept Reagan's assertive, proud approach instead of Carter's moralizing. Reagan encouraged Americans to accept his approach of a free economy, rebuilding of defenses, and a willingness to more broadly challenge aggressions and insurgency, world-wide. With his overwhelming victory, Reagan had a mandate to make changes.

An example of diplomatic changes made by Reagan is the Reagan Doctrine, in which he pledged to support indigenous forces fighting the spread of Communism. Also, the Carter Doctrine remained in force, with Reagan continuing the policy of regarding the Persian Gulf region as a vital interest of the United States.

Reagan continued the military programs that began under Carter and added new programs. Progress was made in lift capability, marked by the purchase of new C-5B transport aircraft for efficiently lifting outsized cargo. Reagan added

more depth in training and spare parts for equipment, and, believing in an all-volunteer military, provided numerous pay raises for the armed forces. His general goals such as the 600 ship navy and forty tactical fighter wing air force supported various commitments, including the Gulf region.

Among the major defense items under Reagan were the Strategic Defense Initiative, the B-1B bomber, and the Peacekeeper (MX) missile, none of which were intended for a conventional theater. While Carter's budget increases generally emphasized general purpose conventional forces -- in large part to meet his commitment to Persian Gulf security -- Reagan increases were focused on both strategic and general purpose forces.

When the Reagan Administration entered office, there were numerous proposals for the future of command responsibilities in Southwest Asia. Jeffrey Record pushed his earlier proposal to make it primarily a Navy-Marine Corps responsibility. He expected that, instead of land warfare, American involvement in the region would mainly involve keeping maritime routes open to free navigation.[66] General Warner, the CINCRED, reiterated his argument that REDCOM should control the RDJTF. He cited the proliferation of *ad hoc* command arrangements, largely controlled by Washington instead of by the unified commanders. There also were proposals that the region come

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[66]Kennedy School of Government Case Program, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-44.

under the responsibility of PACOM or EUCOM. Finally, there were proposals to make RDJTF a *unified* command, or to make no changes at all.[67]

It was increasingly clear that changes had to be made, as the REDCOM-RDJTF relationship was severely strained. On February 26, 1981, the JCS recommended that EUCOM take over RDJTF. The only dissent was from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, who wanted RDJTF to be abolished, with Southwest Asian responsibilities being transferred to PACOM.

From within the NSC staff came the recommendation to establish a *unified* command for the region. The President, Secretary of Defense Weinberger, and National Security Advisor Richard Allen all agreed. Furthermore, the Reagan Administration was more willing than the Carter Administration to make command arrangements of a strong and permanent nature. Secretary Weinberger, therefore, announced on April 24, 1981 that RDJTF would be upgraded to *unified* command status.[68]

As a result of the Secretary's announcement, General Warner resigned as CINCRED, retiring from his military career. The following month, in appearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, his testimony reflected his enduring bitterness:

> The position I have taken in the past, and did here last year, was that due to the paucity of forces we

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[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

> now have, that when we continue to proliferate headquarters without an attendant increase in forces, we create a facade of readiness that simply does not exist. It may fool us more than it does anybody else. Because of that, it would be better to go back to the Strike Command concept and have only one command deal with the few forces we now have in the U.S. We should not limit their focus exclusively to Southwest Asia, but instead include a worldwide contingency mission requirement. Readiness Command should be the unified command headquarters to plan for this since it already is a unified command, and let the RDJTF remain in Tampa [at MacDill AFB] with its original worldwide mission. Southwest Asia may be the priority for the moment. The RDJTF should then respond back through any command chain that the JCS felt was necessary at the time of execution.

General Warner went on, though, to explain how the decision of the President and the Secretary of Defense should be implemented. He concluded by recommending that his command -- REDCOM -- be abolished since he believed its viability had been irreparably compromised.[69]

RDJTF was formally removed from REDCOM in October of 1981 and, on January 1, 1983, RDJTF became the *unified* United States Central Command. CENTCOM now had an uphill struggle to define its geographic area of responsibility and to gain access to the forces necessary to give the command credibility. The area of responsibility is quite interesting, and reflects political imperatives. CENTCOM 's area includes the Persian Gulf (or, consistent with CENTCOM's preferred usage, "Arabian Gulf") and its littoral states -- the center

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[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

of western interests in the region. Also included is the Southwest Asian area from the Red Sea east, including Afghanistan -- which had been invaded by the Soviets -- and Pakistan -- important in supporting the Afghan resistance. The Indian Ocean, excluding the Gulf of Oman, is within PACOM's area of responsibility, the Navy having been unwilling to give up water to a command not headed by an admiral. The confrontation states of Israel, Lebanon and Syria, along with Turkey -- a NATO member -- remain within EUCOM's area. In Africa, Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya -- all important because of possible regional base access -- are within CENTCOM's area, but other African countries -- including Arab countries of northern Africa -- are not. The boundaries between CENTCOM and the other commands, then, reflect the compromises of international politics and of Pentagon bureaucratic politics.[70]

Unlike EUCOM and PACOM, CENTCOM had few forces of its own, other than headquarters staff members and the small naval unit headquartered in Bahrain. Gradually, component commands from the various services were formed, with CENTCOM able to draw forces, mainly from the continental United States, in the event of war. Many of these forces, though, were dual-hatted, with commitments to serve either under CENTCOM or as backup forces for the other commands. CENTCOM's capability was

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[70] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

hampered by its lack of bases or of a headquarters in the Middle East and by the lack of standing agreements with regional countries to host troops and provide facilities. There were, however, informal agreements with regional countries. Improvements were made in the facilities on Diego Garcia. Also, a pre-positioning program placed large quantities of military equipment and supplies in the region, to ease the logistical difficulties of deployment. Exercises were occasionally held in the region. Security assistance to friendly countries continued, with the Americans maintaining a low-profile, over-the-horizon presence.[11] In an actual operation, American forces prctected re-flagged Kuwaiti oil tankers in 1987. This provided valuable military experience in the region, especially in naval "brown water" operations.

As CENTCOM began to hold its own in the world of *unified* and *specified* commands, attention began to be directed to the rapidly growing military reform movement. The Reagan Administration was challenged by many critics who believed that defense funds were not being used effectively. Some reformers wanted decreased military spending while others supported increases. But all were in favor of major changes in how the money was spent. Many of the past reform themes were revived. Reformers again called for stronger *unified* commanders, for changes in the *Unified Command Plan*, for a

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[11] *Ibid., pp. 43-46.*

stronger Chairman of the JCS, and for other Pentagon organizational changes that would reduce inter-service rivalry and increase force-projection capability. Reformers could be found in a variety of settings, including the Congress, academia, the think tanks, and within the military, including both civilian defense officials and uniformed officers. Though initially few in number, the movement grew as the defense budgets grew and as concern that the money be well-spent spread.

The congressional reformers established their own bi-partisan caucus. Prominent here were members such as Senator Gary Hart. The movement gained momentum when Senators Barry Goldwater and Sam Nunn became Chairman and ranking minority member, respectively, of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Both wanted to see changes in the Department of Defense, with Goldwater determined to do whatever it took, prior to his retirement, to impose changes by legislation.

In his memoirs, Goldwater describes the challenge they faced in passing reform legislation:

> Apart from certain religious groups, the U.S. military may be the most tradition-minded, conservative institution in America. It is certainly the most conservative institution of government. Our meeting [with the JCS on Feb. 3, 1986] concerned changes that would cut to the core of their professional lives and hallowed traditions...We proposed to transform inviolate military organizational command...These distinguished men were now facing the military

> mind's worst nightmare: the uncertainty of change.[72]

The resistance was stronger than Goldwater expected:

> When the committee began the markup session...seven unrequested, highly critical letters arrived -- one from each service chief as well as others from the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Two requested letters, from Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Chairman [of the JCS] Crowe, were critical but, unlike the others, constructive in tone.[73]

Perhaps the strongest opposition came from the Navy:

> [Senator John] Warner, a former Secretary of the Navy, was the most vocal opponent of the measure. He was forcefully backed by John Lehman, Secretary of the Navy...the Navy has always considered itself autonomous, a separate, elite body of officers and men with a distinct mission and tradition. Its leaders have consistently maintained that no naval vessel or unit should ever be placed under the command of an Army or Air Force officer. Since World War II, the Navy has led the opposition to unifying the armed services.[74]

In 1985, committee staff working for Goldwater and Nunn had released a report entitled *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*. This 645-page report examined the history of American defense organization, identified problems, and proposed changes.

In July of 1985, Reagan appointed the President's Commission on Defense Management -- often referred to as the Packard Commission -- to examine similar issues. This group

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[72]Barry M. Goldwater and Jack Casserly, *Goldwater* (New York, 1988), p. 336.

[73]*Ibid.*, p. 339.

[74]*Ibid.*

released its interim report in February of 1986 and its final report in June of 1986. These reports called for changes similar to those recommended by the Senate study. There had been reform legislation in the works, which culminated in the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* becoming law on October 1, 1986.

The Packard Commission recommended that *unified* commanders have greater flexibility in organizing their subordinate forces. The Commission also found that the geographic boundaries between commands were too arbitrary:

> Today, some threats overlap those boundaries and must be dealt with functionally.
> Moreover, the current command structure reflects command arrangements that evolved during World War II to deal with high-intensity conflict across vast regions of the globe. However well the layers of the present command structure suit the contingency of general war, they are not always well-suited to the regional crises, tensions, and conflicts that are commonplace today.[75]

Another recommendation was that a *unified* command be formed to coordinate all defense-related air, land, and sea transportation. The Commission recommended that previous legislation prohibiting such an organization be repealed.[76]

The Packard Commission also recognized the importance of having high-quality officers serving in joint duty assignments. It did not believe, however, that legislation

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[75] *A Quest for Excellence: Final Report to the President by the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management*, 1986, p. 36.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

could effectively impose such a requirement.[77]

The Congress differed here. The *Goldwater-Nichols Act* required that all officers promoted to flag rank have experience in joint duty. Furthermore, it imposed stringent new requirements for the provision of joint professional military education for officers. Finally, special protections were added to the promotion process to ensure that officers on joint tours -- serving outside their parent services which promote them -- receive equal or better consideration for promotion as those officers assigned within their own services.

The *Goldwater-Nichols Act* gave *unified* commanders more say in acquisition and in the planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS). Goldwater explains what the issues were here:

> There is an inherent budgetary conflict between the generals and admirals in Washington on the one hand, and [the unified and specified] commanders in the field on the other. The Pentagon favors investment in big hardware, research and development, and military construction. Commanders in Europe and the Pacific are much more concerned about their state of readiness -- what is needed most if they have to go into action tomorrow. There is a multibillion-dollar question: Do we have a balance between these two concerns? If our plan means anything, it gives field commanders a greater voice in the budget process to mandate that balance.[78]

The *Goldwater-Nichols Act* also required periodic reviews

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[77] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[78] Goldwater, *op. cit.*, p.356.

of the *Unified Command Plan.* For the initial review, it was required that consideration be given to creating new *unified* commands for strategic forces, special operations, transportation, and the Northeast Asia geographic region. Additionally, the review of geographic boundaries between other commands was required. For example, consideration was to be given to including in CENTCOM's responsibilities its adjacent ocean areas -- presently under PACOM -- and the areas of the Middle East that are assigned to EUCOM.[79]

Changes in command structure soon occurred. Perhaps the new *unified* United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) required the most legislative pressure. The DOD Authorization Act and the continuing resolutions for FY 1987 contained provisions requiring a new command structure for special operations.[80] There was the customary resistance from both the service departments and from the other *unified* commands, which feared that special operations was becoming a very powerful special interest. Among the traditional reasons for opposing special operations are the Army's preference for large land campaigns, the Navy's preference for "blue water" missions, and the Air Force's preference for bomber and fighter operations, none of which are predominant in special

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[79] *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986,* Public Law 99-433, Oct. 1, 1986.

[80] *United States Military Posture FY 1989* (Washington, 1988), p. 84.

operations.

The Holloway Commission had cited lack of joint coordination of special operations as a reason for the failure of the attempt to rescue the American hostages from Iran in 1980. In 1985 the Senate Armed Services Committee staff report cited service parochialism, lack of joint doctrine, and allowing individual service interests to dictate the composition of the force as reasons for the mission's failure. Both reports concluded that a new, coordinated command structure was needed.[81] The military departments, however, did not agree that a special operations command was necessary. As one of USSOCOM's public affairs documents frankly states, "Since its 1987 establishment, USSOCOM has had to overcome enormous bureaucratic obstacles to execute its full range of authority and responsibilities..."[82]

Conversely, the military was relatively receptive to the establishment of the *unified* United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) on July 1, 1987. This command was given wartime operational control of the Air Force's Military Airlift Command (MAC), the Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC), and the Army's Military Transportation Management

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[81]United States General Accounting Office. *Special Operations Command: Progress in Implementing Legislative Mandates.* Report to the Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Washington, 1990), pp. 11-12.

[82]*Fact Sheet: United States Special Operations Command.* USSOCOM Public Affairs Office: MacDill AFB, FL, Oct. 1, 1990.

Command (MTMC).

In 1982, there had been interest within the Department of Defense in establishing a unified command consisting of MSC and MTMC. Since the two commands had many facilities located near one another -- sometimes on the same base -- the consolidation could have been done with relative ease and greater efficiency would have been the result. There was opposition in the Congress, however, with some members fearing that the services would use this a means of distancing themselves from their responsibilities for supporting the relatively unpopular transportation tasks. The result was the inclusion of language prohibiting the establishment of a unified transportation command, in the 1983 defense authorization legislation.[83]

After this prohibition was removed, the TRANSCOM concept progressed rapidly. I believe this was due to two reasons. First, TRANSCOM deals with cargo and troop transport instead

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[83]A theme of this thesis is that unpredictable shifts occur at the political levels of defense policy-making, while remarkable consistency prevails among the military and among the reformers. Here, the Congress made one of its dramatic shifts. In 1982, the rationale was to force the services to support unpopular missions, such as transportation, by keeping these functions in the individual service departments. Only four years later, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* was based on the premise that such jobs can only be done effectively in a joint environment, under the command of a powerful unified CINC who operates outside of the individual services.

United States Senate. *Proposed Integration of the Military Traffic Management Command and the Military Sealift Command into a Unified Command: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services.* June 17, 1982 (Washington, 1982), pp. 1-2, 4.

of the more controversial and emotional issues of combat weaponry, tactics, and operations. Thus, for the individual services to lose operational control of transportation would not be nearly so traumatic as to lose control of combat forces.

Also, the strong leadership of Air Force General Duane Cassidy -- the first CINCTRANS -- was important in setting up the new TRANSCOM headquarters, near MAC headquarters -- which he already commanded -- at Scott AFB, Illinois. The General feared that, in recommending a transportation command, the Packard Commission might have been making a half-hearted proposal. The last thing he wanted was to establish a nominal unified command headquarters which would be ineffectual itself and which would also weaken MAC. He went to such Packard Commission members as Frank Carlucci and Brent Scowcroft and gained their assurances that they would back up his efforts to establish TRANSCOM as a full-fledged *unified* command. Soon after becoming CINCTRANS, General Cassidy became aware of the major shortfalls in American sealift and maritime transportation capability. A success story of military reform -- and evidence of broad thinking in support of the national security -- was Cassidy's advocacy of rebuilding the maritime industry. He developed a strong working relationship with the Secretary of Transportation and spoke out for this cause which had been neglected by industry, government, and naval

leadership.[84]

Still, General Cassidy's Air Force perspective is revealed when he stated that he supported the establishing of TRANSCOM only after he was assured that MAC, which he already commanded, would be the "lead command" among the three service component commands.[85] Also, he made efforts to preserve, as much as was possible, MAC's old lines of authority to the JCS, even though MAC was no longer to be a *specified* command, but, instead, the Air Force component of the *unified* TRANSCOM. The General also contended that TRANSCOM should always be commanded an Air Force officer: the MAC commander, who would continue in Cassidy's dual-hatted role.[86]

Also in 1987, the CENTCOM-REDCOM rivalry was resolved with the abolition of REDCOM. This was possible since

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[84]*General Duane H. Cassidy, United States Transportation Command's First Commander in Chief: An Oral History* (Scott AFB, Illinois, 1990), pp. 4, 30-31, 36-42.

[85]The idea of one service's component command serving as the "lead command" is reminiscent of the old concept of a service department or chief of staff serving as "executive agent" for a unified command. This arrangement -- which resulted in one service dominating each unified command -- was abandoned during the Eisenhower years, in the *Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958*. To revert to such a concept would be to weaken such effects of the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* as clear accountability, an emphasis on joint combat capability, and increased powers of the unified CINCs.

[86]Even as the first CINCTRANS -- the beneficiary of reform -- he took the oral history opportunity to take a shot at another unified command: the struggling new USSOCOM. He stated that the issue of a special operations command should be re-considered, and that the legislation requiring the command had been -- like the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* -- too specific in micro-managing reforms within the military. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 14, 42-43.

TRANSCOM now existed and was able to take over much of the deployment coordination responsibility that CINCRED and his Joint Deployment Agency had previously held. All tactical Air Force units based in the United States could now be under the operational control of the combatant commands -- such as SOUTHCOM or CENTCOM -- which would control them in wartime, instead of being under REDCOM's operational control. The massive numbers of Army troops in the United States remained within the existing Army Forces Command, which was given new status as the *specified* FORSCOM, under a four-star Army CINC.

Reform thinking had been gradually progressing for years by the time President Reagan entered office. The movement rapidly gained momentum during Reagan's first term. Although the Administration did not place a high priority on reform initiatives, there was little choice but to go along with the new legislation. The credibility of the conservative, pro-defense Senator Goldwater was crucial in gaining both passage of the legislation and the President's signature.

The Reagan years, then, were years of rebuilding American military capability. While Carter had taken some regional initiatives, largely focused on the potential for Soviet expansion into the Middle East, Reagan used his mandate to implement a global and enduring build-up in strength. Many of his efforts focused on strategic forces to counter the Soviet Union. But the conventional force-projection capability -- useful against varied threats in both traditional theaters and

in the Third World -- also experienced rapid expansion during the Reagan Administration. For the military establishment, there was some pain accompanying the growth. In the early Reagan years, it was the controversy over establishing CENTCOM and, later, it was the controversy surrounding reform. The reform movement's steady progress fine-tuned the Reagan build-up. It culminated in sweeping legislation and major changes in the *Unified Command Plan.* The newly empowered *unified* commanders now had unprecedented power to effectively project force and to lead troops in combat.

V

CONCLUSION

The American commitment to project rapidly deployable conventional and special operations forces into the Third World has been inconsistent during the Cold War years. This contrasts with the stability of the commitment to resist Communist expansion in the more traditional theaters. The military establishment has been cautious in making new commitments which often require new tactics, new equipment, and new command structures, often without adequate funding. The reform movement, throughout the Cold War, has encouraged change, especially in the organization of the military establishment. Many of the themes, which recurred for years, finally came to fruition near the end of the Cold War. The American military force that was called into action in 1990 and 1991 in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm represents the culmination of many years of debate over the fighting of foreign wars and over the command organization of the military establishment.

There has been a pattern in the political processes affecting the organizations addressed in this thesis: first,

there has been a resistance to allowing ground forces to become involved in the Third World, followed by a commitment for limited involvement to counter crises and Communist insurgency threats. Some proponents hope this will be a temporary commitment, lasting only until the threat passes. Instead, this commitment then grows into a larger commitment to counter a broader spectrum of threats. After some major frustration, the nation reduces such commitments, and focuses instead on its own internal concerns.

The Republican Eisenhower Administration, following World War II and the Korean War, focused on domestic growth and was loathe to become involved in another limited war. The Nixon, Ford, and early-Carter years, following the involvement in Vietnam, were characterized by similar priorities. Such views are common now, in the post-Cold War environment.

The Kennedy Administration -- composed of many young Democrats of the generation that had fought tyranny in World War II -- made efforts to counter Communist tyranny and insurgency through such innovations as STRICOM, special operations forces, and increased mobility. They hoped that these efforts -- as part of a broader national security strategy which included other, non-military foreign programs -- would deter and weaken threats. Their ideals were shattered with the lack of rapid success in Vietnam.

The Carter Administration, because of shattered ideals, established RDJTF, hoping it also would be a temporary force

against a short-lived threat. Carter failed to realize that such sudden hawkishness can not be short-lived. In the short term, he ran the risk of exacerbating a bad situation by either not supporting the commitment of the Carter Doctrine due to lack of adequate forces, or of having to resort to the potentially catastrophic policy of retaliating at a time and place of our own choosing, or with nuclear weapons. In the long term, once such a commitment and the forces to back it up became well-established, bureaucratic momentum would make it difficult for him to quickly return to détente.

Under President Reagan, Carter's regional commitment was expanded into a stronger global posture. The establishment of CENTCOM marked an increased commitment in the Middle East. Other ways in which Reagan increased American strength included the Strategic Defense Initiative and the Reagan Doctrine. Reagan sought to counter not only the Communist threat, but other concerns as well. An example is the attack on Libya in 1986, which was retaliation against terrorism. With the end of the Cold War, the nation returns to a time of questioning its overseas role.

While the broad political preferences of Americans occasionally shift, members of the military profession generally resist the resulting changes in command structure, for several reasons. One reason is that the military is very rich in traditions, which are disturbed when major organizational changes occur. Also, when one faces combat, it

is reassuring to be operating under an established, proven command structure which has withstood years of fluctuations in national consensus. The last thing soldiers want is to be fighting under the auspices of a concept the rest of the nation has abandoned. Another major reason for resisting change is that the military is not immune to the realities of bureaucratic politics. As in any other organization, many military officers are likely to seek to protect their own organization, their own mission, their own jobs, and their own opportunities for advancement. The military is especially resistant to changes in its actual combat forces, its *raison d'être*. It was with relative ease that the military acquiesced to the TRANSCOM concept, a support function. But the disputes over STRICOM, RDJTF, CENTCOM, REDCOM, and USSOCOM were far more bitter because they involved changes by the civilian leadership in the military's combat organizations. Military officers are among the most loyal of Americans -- so loyal that they have committed a major portion of their lives to serving in highly traditional military organizations, which they are loathe to see changed.

For years, the reform movement has steadily encouraged changes. While some reformers call for outright unification of the military departments, this is unlikely to happen. More likely, instead, are compromises which improve joint capability. Just as the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* imposed more joint emphasis in the 1980s, reformers of the 1990s are likely

to call for joint improvements. This will take the form of changes such as improved inter-service radio-electronic compatibility and the expansion of TRANSCOM from a wartime-only role to also controlling peacetime transportation needs. There will continue to be emphasis on *unified* commanders having strong authority over their service component commanders. And for unpopular special operations forces, legislation will continue to require that USSOCOM exist.

During years of reduced defense funding, reform is unlikely, since each service and command is attempting to save what currently exists. During war, reform is unlikely since there are higher priorities. This is why reform was able to happen during the Reagan years when there was both peace and an abundance of military funding. The timing for reform also requires that reform-minded leaders who are secure in their positions and willing to take risks be in office at the right moment. Eisenhower -- a successful five-star general and President -- was secure enough to make changes in the military establishment in which he had spent most of his life. In the early 1980s, General Edward C. Meyer -- secure in his position as Army Chief of Staff and seasoned by first hand knowledge of the Army's mistakes in Vietnam -- was able and eager to reform. And, in the mid-1980s, the rise of Barry Goldwater -- confident, as a reserve general and as a Senator, soon to retire -- and Sam Nunn -- conscientious and popular -- coincided with the large peacetime budgets. Thus, in 1986,

the atmosphere was ripe for reform. Imagine, though, if Senator John Warner had been -- as he is now -- the senior Republican on the Armed Services Committee. It is likely that he would have slowed or stopped reform.

Now, with the post-Cold War military cuts, reform is again likely to happen slowly. Perhaps, though, since recent reforms have been sweeping, efforts to undercut today's joint, unified emphasis will be unsuccessful.

Since 1989, the world has witnessed the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and of the Soviet Union. Also, there has been a general repudiation of Communism in many areas of the world. With such dramatic changes, Americans have declared victory in the Cold War. With victory, Americans traditionally like to demobilize military forces, return to a peacetime economy, and focus on domestic concerns. That is an inclination at the time of this writing. Even as budgetary and global realities have already caused dramatic decreases in American military capability, there are calls for increasingly radical cuts in the national defense. There are renewed appeals for isolationism. Both the Democratic left and elements of the Republican right now feel that America should "come home". We certainly are in an introspective period now.

One must wonder, though, how long this will last. While our former enemy no longer directly threatens the western world, there remain several Third World threats -- Communist and otherwise. Even without these threats, there remain

reasons why American force might need to be projected. The top leadership of the Department of Defense remind us today that both the Korean War and the 1990-1991 Gulf War were operations in which the United States became involved on extremely short notice, one shortly after the post-World War II peace had begun and the other shortly after many had begun declaring the post-Cold War peace.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm were successes resulting from the events discussed in this thesis. For years beforehand, the political situation had been such that the nation had large, well-equipped, well-trained, and well-paid armed forces. Chains of command were precise and the theater unified commander had sufficient authority to do his job effectively. The military members -- though sometimes resistant to reforms -- performed professionally under the newly reformed organizational structure.

There are many controversial debates in progress now over defense programs for the remainder of the 1990s. There is relative lack of controversy, though, over plans to continue improving sealift and airlift. There is little vocal opposition to the new C-17 airlifter. Just as Kennedy increased airlift forces, just as Carter made MAC a specified command, just as Reagan purchased the C-5B fleet, and, prodded by the reformers, established TRANSCOM, today the mobility capability for force-projection continues to grow. Most likely, the C-17s will fly into regions of hostility in the

future. This might be to support PACOM in fighting a Communist threat. But, more likely, TRANSCOM will use the C-17s to move FORSCOM troops overseas to a Third World region to fight a non-Communist threat, under the strong direction of a unified CINC, such as that of CENTCOM.

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